

April 1839

THE

COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

VOL. I. BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 2, 1839. No. 17.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

(Concluded from our last Number.)

THE law exacts a performance of duty from other municipal officers, under the sanction of a penalty ; because, as they receive something by way of fee or per diem allowance, they may well be held amenable for any official delinquency. But the framers of the law prescribing the duties of committee men, must have felt the flagrant injustice of denouncing any penalty for derelictions, when the demands upon time and money were so ample, and the requital nothing. Hence an entire abandonment of duty involves no forfeiture, and subjects to no animadversion. Such abandonment has occurred, and been tolerated and acquiesced in, if not demanded, by public sentiment. At one convention it was stated, openly and without contradiction, by a gentleman of high respectability, in the presence of his colleagues and others, who must have known the case, that in his town, containing about *forty* school districts, the school committee, for eight or more successive years, had never examined a teacher, nor visited a school. During this long intermission of duty, the children in the public schools passed through *two thirds* of the whole of their school-going life. Many other cases have come to my knowledge, calculated to excite the deepest alarm in every mind, which sees the character of the next generation of men foreshadowed and prophesied in the direction which is given to the children of this.

I feel it my duty, therefore, to submit to the Board of Education the expediency of recommending to the general court, the appropriation of some portion of the income of the school fund, when divided among the towns, as a compensation to school-committees for the discharge of duties, so laborious and influential. Were this done, there would then be justice and propriety, certainly in cases of gross delinquency, in subjecting them to legal animadversion ; or, withholding from their respective towns their share of the annual apportionment. This course would relieve the towns from the burden of taxing themselves to pay the committee. The single fact of being obliged to render a written account to the town, of their services, at the end of each year, would prompt to punctuality and fidelity, and create another impulse to duty. It may be said, that in some towns, the money would be paid without much valuable consideration in services rendered ; but this, it is believed, would happen in but few cases, even at first, and would not be lastingly true, any where. Such a provision might require some slight modification in the constitution of the board of town committees. Indeed, is it not worthy of consideration, whether some plan may not be adopted in distributing the income of the school fund, which would assist towns or districts in purchasing apparatus or school libraries, or in doing some other thing for the benefit of the schools, which they cannot conveniently, or will not ordinarily do without such assistance. The fund would then be a stimulant instead of an opiate.

Could the complement of service be secured from committees as well

without compensation, as with it, undoubtedly such unbought efforts would infuse into the system a quicker life and a higher energy ; because work is always better done, just in proportion as it is done from a higher motive. But in this case, I am satisfied, that the only alternative presented us is, between a groping and dilatory performance, on the one hand, and such faithful, though not wholly disinterested efforts, on the other, as may be commanded for a moderate requital.

It is obvious, that neglectful school committees, incompetent teachers, and an indifferent public, may go on, degrading each other, until the noble system of free schools shall be abandoned by a people, so self-abased as to be unconscious of their abasement.

Thirdly. Another topic, in some respects kindred to the last, is the apathy of the people themselves towards our Common Schools. The wide usefulness of which this institution is capable, is shorn away on both sides, by two causes diametrically opposite. On one side, there is a portion of the community, who do not attach sufficient value to the system, to do the things necessary to its healthful and energetic working. They may say excellent things about it, they may have a conviction of its general utility ; but they do not understand, that the wisest conversation not embodied in action, that convictions too gentle and quiet to coerce performance, are little better than worthless. The prosperity of the system always requires some labor. It requires a conciliatory disposition, and oftentimes a little sacrifice of personal preferences. A disagreement about the location of a schoolhouse, for instance, may occasion the division of a district, and thus inflict permanent impotency upon each of its parts. In such cases, a spirit of forbearance and compromise averting the evil, would double the common fund of knowledge for every child in the territory. Except in those cases, where it is made necessary by the number of the scholars, the dismemberment of a district, though it may leave the body, drains out its life-blood. So through remissness or ignorance, on the part of parent and teacher, the minds of children may never be awakened to a consciousness of having, within themselves, blessed treasures of innate and noble faculties, far richer than any outward possessions can be ; they may never be supplied with any foretaste of the enduring satisfactions of knowledge ; and hence, they may attend school for the allotted period, merely as so many male and female automata, between four and sixteen years of age. As the progenitor of the human race, after being perfectly fashioned in every limb and organ and feature, might have lain till this time, a motionless body in the midst of the beautiful garden of Eden, had not the Creator breathed into him a living soul ; so children, without some favoring influences, to woo out and cheer their faculties, may remain mere inanimate forms, while surrounded by the paradise of knowledge. It is generally believed, that there is an increasing class of people amongst us, who are losing sight of the necessity of securing ample opportunities for the education of their children. And thus, on one side, the institution of Common Schools is losing its natural support, if it be not incurring actual opposition.

Opposite to this class, who tolerate, from apathy, a depression in the Common Schools, there is another class who affix so high a value upon the culture of their children, and understand so well the necessity of a skilful preparation of means for its bestowment, that they turn away from the Common Schools, in their depressed state, and seek, elsewhere, the helps of a more enlarged and thorough education. Thus the standard, in descending to a point corresponding with the views and wants of one portion of society, falls below the demands and the regards of another. Out of different feelings grow different plans ; and while one remains fully content with the Common School, the other builds up the private school or the academy. The education fund is thus divided into two parts. Neither of the halves does a quarter of the good which might be accomplished by a union of the

whole. One party pays an adequate price, but has a poor school ; the other has a good school, but at more than fourfold cost. Were their funds and their interest combined, the poorer school might be as good as the best ; and the dearest almost as low as the cheapest. This last-mentioned class, embraces a considerable portion, perhaps a majority, of the wealthy persons in the State ; but it also includes another portion, numerically much greater, who, whether rich or poor, have a true perception of the sources of their children's individual and domestic wellbeing, and who consider the common necessities of their life, their food and fuel and clothes, and all their bodily comforts as superfluities, compared with the paramount necessity of a proper mental and moral culture of their offspring.

The maintenance of free schools rests wholly upon the social principle. It is emphatically a case where men, individually powerless, are collectively strong. The population of Massachusetts, being more than *eighty* to the square mile, gives it the power of maintaining Common Schools. Take the whole range of the western and southwestern States, and their population, probably, does not exceed a dozen or fifteen to the square mile. Hence, except in favorable localities, Common Schools are impossible ; as the population upon a territory of convenient size for a district, is too small to sustain a school. Here, nothing is easier. But by dividing our funds, we cast away our natural advantages. We voluntarily reduce ourselves to the feebleness of a State, having but half our density of population.

It is generally supposed, that this severance of interests, and consequent diminution of power, have increased much of late, and are now increasing in an accelerated ratio. This is probable, for it is a self-aggravating evil. Its origin and progress, are simple and uniform. Some few persons in a village or town, finding the advantages of the Common School inadequate to their wants, unite to establish a private one. They transfer their children from the former to the latter. The heart goes with the treasure. The Common School ceases to be visited by those whose children are in the private. Such parents decline serving as committee men. They have now no personal motive to vote for, or advocate, any increase of the town's annual appropriation for schools ; to say nothing of the temptation to discourage such increase in indirect ways, or even to vote directly against it. If, by this means, some of the best scholars happen to be taken from the Common School, the standard of that school is lowered. The lower classes in a school have no abstract standard of excellence, and seldom aim at higher attainments than such as they daily witness. All children, like all men, rise easily to the common level. There, the mass stop ; strong minds only ascend higher. But raise the standard, and, by a spontaneous movement, the mass will rise again, and reach it. Hence the removal of the most forward scholars from a school is not a small misfortune. Again ; the teacher of the Common School rarely visits or associates, except where the scholars of his own school are the origin of the acquaintance, and the bond of attachment. All this inevitably depresses and degrades the Common School. In this depressed and degraded state, another portion of the parents find it, in fitness and adequacy, inferior to their wants ; and, as there is now a private school in the neighborhood, the strength of the inducement, and the facility of the transfer, overbalance the objection of increased expense, and the doors of the Common School close, at once, upon their children, and upon their interest in its welfare. Thus another blow is dealt ; then others escape ; action and reaction alternate, until the Common School is left to the management of those, who have not the desire or the power, either to improve it or to command a better. Under this silent, but rapid corrosion, it recently happened, in one of the most flourishing towns of the State, having a population of more than three thousand persons, that the principal district school actually ran down and was not kept for two years. I have been repeatedly assured, where every bias of my informants would lead

them to extenuate and not to magnify the facts, that, in populous villages and central districts, where there is naturally a concentration of wealth and intelligence, and a juster appreciation of the blessings of a good education, and where, therefore, the Common School ought to be the best in the town, it was the poorest.

Believing that this subject bears very nearly the same relation to the healthfulness of our republican institutions, that air does to animal life, I must solicit for it, in some detail, the consideration of the Board. Our law enacts, that every town containing *five hundred* families, or householders, (taken here to be equivalent to *three thousand* inhabitants, or six persons to a family, on an average,) shall maintain a school, to be kept by a master of competent ability and good morals, "*for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town,*" ten months, at least, exclusive of vacations, in each year, who, in addition to the branches of learning to be taught in the district schools, shall give instruction in the history of the United States, book-keeping, surveying, geometry, and algebra; and in towns of *four thousand* inhabitants, the master of such school, shall be competent to instruct in the Latin and Greek languages, and general history, rhetoric, and logic. In this Commonwealth, there are *forty-three* towns, exclusive of the city of Boston, coming within the provisions above recited. I leave this city out of the computation, because the considerations, appertaining to it in connexion with this subject, are peculiar to itself. I need only mention, that Common Schools, in Boston, valuable as they are, bear no proportion to the whole means of education and improvement, which they do in the country. These *forty-three* towns contain an aggregate of about *two fifths* of all the population of the State, exclusive of the metropolis. Of these *forty-three* towns, only *fourteen* maintain those schools "*for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town,*" which the law requires. The other *twenty-nine* towns, in which this provision of the law is wholly disregarded, contain a very large fraction over *one fifth* part of the whole population of the State, out of Boston. These *twenty-nine* delinquent towns, if we leave out the three cities of Boston, Lowell, and Salem, stand in the very front rank of wealth and population. They contain thirty-three thousand five hundred and sixty-six persons between the ages of four and sixteen years. And while the two hundred and ninety-four towns, heard from, raise by taxes for the support of Common Schools, a sum equal to two dollars and eighty-one cents for each of the one hundred and sixty-five thousand and fifty-three persons supposed to be wholly dependent upon the Common Schools, these *twenty-nine* rich and populous towns raise but two dollars and twenty-one cents each, for the thirty-three thousand five hundred and sixty-six children they contain between the ages of four and sixteen years. And so much as these wealthy towns fall short of their contributive share of the two dollars and eighty-one cents, so much must the other towns overrun theirs. In these *twenty-nine* towns, which do not keep the "*town school*" required by law, the sum of *forty-seven* thousand seven hundred and seventy-six dollars is expended in private schools and academies, while only *seventy-four* thousand three hundred and thirteen dollars is expended for the support of public schools.

The average expense for tuition of all those attending private schools and academies, inclusive of those small and short private schools which are kept in the districts between the winter and summer terms, and which comprise, probably, more than one half of the scholars attending the whole number, is more than fourfold the average expense of those attending the public schools.

In the above computation, respecting towns obliged by law to maintain a school "*for the benefit of all the inhabitants,*" I have included in the class, observant of the law, one town where no such school is yet established, but preparations only are making to open one the ensuing season; and two other towns, where, though such schools exist, yet their accommodations

for room, and their provisions for instruction, are so limited, as to render the adoption of arbitrary rules absolutely indispensable, for the exclusion of many children desirous of attending them. The results would have been far more criminating, had I not adopted this most exculpatory construction.

The refusal of the town to maintain the free town school, drives a portion of its inhabitants to establish the private school or academy. When established, these institutions tend strongly to diminish the annual appropriations of the town ; they draw their ablest recruits from the Common Schools ; and, by being able to offer higher compensation, they have a preemptive right to the best qualified teachers ; while, simultaneously, the district schools are reduced in length, deteriorated in quality, and, to some extent, bereft of talents competent for instruction.

Some objections are urged, on both sides, to a restitution of our system to its original design ; but, as they are anti-social in their nature, they must be dissipated by a more enlarged view of the subject. Citizens, living remote from the place, where the town school would probably be kept, allege the difference in the distances of residence, and the consequent inequality of advantages, derivable from it, as arguments against its maintenance. They, therefore, resist its establishment, and thus extinguish all chances of a better education, for a vast majority of the children in the town, whatever may be their talents or genius. They debar some, perhaps their own offspring, from the means of reaching a higher sphere of usefulness and honor. They forbid their taking the first steps, which are as necessary as the last, in the ascension to excellence. They surrender every vantage ground to those who can and will, in any event, command the means of a higher education for their children. Because the balance of advantages cannot be mathematically adjusted, as in the nature of things it cannot be, they cast their own shares into the adverse scale ; as though it were some compensation, when there is not an absolute equality, to make the inequality absolute. The cost of education is nothing to the rich, while the means of it are every thing to the poor.

Even if the argument, against the town school, thus broadly stated, had validity, its force is essentially impaired by the consideration, that this class of schools need not be confined to one fixed place ; as the statute expressly provides, that they may be kept "alternately at such places in the town, as the inhabitants at their annual meeting shall determine."

On the other hand, the patrons of the private school plead the moral necessity of sustaining it, because, they say, some of the children in the public school are so addicted to profanity or obscenity, so prone to trickishness, or to vulgar and mischievous habits, as to render a removal of their own children from such contaminating influences an obligatory precaution. But would such objectors bestow that guardian care, that parental watchfulness upon the Common Schools, which an institution, so wide and deep-reaching in its influences, demands of all intelligent men, might not these repellent causes be mainly abolished ? Reforms ought to be originated and carried forward by the intelligent portion of society ; by those who can see most links in the chain of causes and effects ; and that intelligence is false to its high trusts, which stands aloof from the labor of enlightening the ignorant and ameliorating the condition of the unfortunate. And what a vision must rise before the minds of all men, endued with the least glimmer of foresight, in the reflection, that, after a few swift years, those children, whose welfare they now discard, and whose associations they deprecate, will constitute more than *five sixths* of the whole body of that community, of which their own children will be only a feeble minority, vulnerable at every point, and utterly incapable of finding a hiding-place for any earthly treasure, where the witness, the juror, and the voter cannot reach and annihilate it !

The theory of our laws and institutions undoubtedly is, *first*, that in every

district of every town in the Commonwealth, there should be a free district school, sufficiently safe, and sufficiently good, for all the children within its territory, where they may be well instructed in the rudiments of knowledge, formed to propriety of demeanor, and imbued with the principles of duty: and *secondly*, in regard to every town, having such an increased population as implies the possession of sufficient wealth, that there should be a school of an advanced character, offering an equal welcome to each one of the same children, whom a peculiar destination, or an impelling spirit of genius, shall send to its open doors,—especially to the children of the poor, who cannot incur the expenses of a residence from home in order to attend such a school. It is on this common platform, that a general acquaintanceship should be formed between the children of the same neighborhood. It is here, that the affinities of a common nature should unite them together so as to give the advantages of preoccupancy and a stable possession to fraternal feelings, against the alienating competitions of subsequent life.

After the State shall have secured to all its children, that basis of knowledge and morality, which is indispensable to its own security; after it shall have supplied them with the instruments of that individual prosperity, whose aggregate will constitute its own social prosperity; then they may be emancipated from its tutelage, each one to go whithersoever his well-instructed mind shall determine. At this point, seminaries for higher learning, academies and universities, should stand ready to receive, at private cost, all whose path to any ultimate destination may lie through their halls. Subject, of course, to many exceptions,—all, however, inconsiderable, compared with the generality of the rule,—this is the paternal and comprehensive theory of our institutions; and, is it possible, that a practical contradiction of this theory can be wise, until another shall be devised, offering some chances at least of equally valuable results?

Amongst any people, sufficiently advanced in intelligence, to perceive, that hereditary opinions on religious subjects are not always coincident with truth, it cannot be overlooked, that the tendency of the private school system is to assimilate our modes of education to those of England, where Churchmen and Dissenters,—each sect according to its own creed,—maintain separate schools, in which children are taught, from their tenderest years, to wield the sword of polemics with fatal dexterity; and where the gospel, instead of being a temple of peace, is converted into an armory of deadly weapons, for social, interminable warfare. Of such disastrous consequences, there is but one remedy and one preventive. It is the elevation of the Common Schools. Until that is accomplished, (for which, however, they ought to cooperate,) those who are able, not only will, but they are bound by the highest obligations, to provide surer and better means for the education of their children.

It ought not to be omitted, that it is urged, in defence of the private school system, that it is preparing a class of better teachers for the Common Schools than they could otherwise obtain. Suppose, however, that the Common Schools were what they should be, could not they prepare the teachers as well?

I trust I shall not be deemed to have given an undue importance to the different interests involved in this topic, when it is considered, that more than *five sixths* of the children in the State, are dependent upon the Common Schools for instruction, and would have no substitute if they became valueless; while less than *one sixth* are educated in the private schools and academies, and these would be educated, even if the Common Schools were abolished. To hold *one sixth* of the children to be equal to five sixths, I should deem to be as great an error in morals as it would be in arithmetic.

The number of scholars, attending private schools and academies, (if we allow four thousand for Boston, which omitted to make any return respecting that fact, the present year, but which returned four thousand as the

number, last year,) is twenty-seven thousand two hundred and sixty-six, and the aggregate paid for their tuition \$328,026 75, while the sum raised by taxation, for all the children in the State, is only \$465,228 04.

Fourthly. Another component element in the prosperity of schools is the competency of teachers. Teaching is the most difficult of all arts, and the profoundest of all sciences. In its absolute perfection, it would involve a complete knowledge of the whole being to be taught, and of the precise manner in which every possible application would affect it; that is, a complete knowledge of all the powers and capacities of the individual, with their exact proportions and relations to each other, and a knowledge, how, at any hour or moment, to select and apply, from a universe of means, the one then exactly apposite to its ever-changing condition. But in a far more limited and practical sense, it involves a knowledge of the principal laws of physical, mental, and moral growth, and of the tendency of means, not more to immediate, than to remote results. Hence to value schools, by length instead of quality, is a matchless absurdity. Arithmetic, grammar, and the other rudiments, as they are called, comprise but a small part of the teachings in a school. The rudiments of feeling are taught not less than the rudiments of thinking. The sentiments and passions get more lessons than the intellect. Though their open recitations may be less, their secret rehearsals are more. And even in training the intellect, much of its chance of arriving, in afterlife, at what we call sound judgment, or common sense; much of its power of perceiving ideas as distinctly as though they were colored diagrams, depends upon the tact and philosophic sagacity of the teacher. He has a far deeper duty to perform, than to correct the erroneous results of intellectual processes. The error in the individual case is of little consequence. It is the false projecting power in the mind,—the power which sends out the error,—that is to be discovered and rectified. Otherwise the error will be repeated, as often as opportunities recur. It is no part of a teacher's vocation, to spend day after day, in moving the hands on the dial-plate backwards and forwards, in order to adjust them to the true time, but he is to adjust the machinery and the regulator, so that they may indicate the true time; so that they may be a standard and measure for other things, instead of needing other things as a standard and measure for them. Yet how can a teacher do this, if he be alike ignorant of the mechanism and the propelling power of the machinery he superintends?

The law lays its weighty injunctions upon teachers, in the following solemn and impressive language: "*It shall be the duty of all instructors of youth, to exert their best endeavors to impress on the minds of children and youth, committed to their care and instruction, the principles of piety, justice, and a sacred regard to truth, love to their country, humanity, and universal benevolence, sobriety, industry, and frugality, chastity, moderation, and temperance, and those other virtues, which are the ornament of human society, and the basis upon which a republican constitution is founded; and it shall be the duty of such instructors, to endeavor to lead their pupils, as their ages and capacities will admit, into a clear understanding of the tendency of the above-mentioned virtues to preserve and perfect a republican constitution, and secure the blessings of liberty, as well as to promote their future happiness, and also to point out to them the evil tendency of the opposite vices.*" Is it not worthy of the most solemn deliberation, whether, under our present system, or rather, our present want of system, in regard to the qualifications and appointment of teachers, we are in any way of realizing, to a reasonable and practicable extent, a fulfilment of the elevated purposes contemplated by the law? And will not an impartial posterity inquire, what measures had been adopted by the lawgiver, to insure the execution of the duties, he had himself so earnestly and solemnly enjoined?

Wherever the discharge of my duties has led me through the State, with

whatever intelligent men I have conversed, the conviction has been expressed with entire unanimity, that there is an extensive want of competent teachers for the Common Schools. This opinion casts no reproach upon that most worthy class of persons, engaged in the sacred cause of education ; and I should be unjust to those, whose views I am here reporting, should I state the fact more distinctly than the qualification. The teachers are as good as public opinion has demanded. Their attainments have corresponded with their opportunities ; and the supply has answered the demand as well in quality as in number. Yet, in numerous instances, school committees have alleged, in justification of their approval of incompetent persons, the utter impossibility of obtaining better for the compensation offered. It was stated publicly, by a member of the school committee of a town, containing thirty or more school districts, that one half at least of the teachers approved by them, would be rejected, only that it would be in vain to expect better teachers for present remuneration. And, without a change in prices, is it reasonable to expect a change in competency, while talent is invited, through so many other avenues, to emolument and distinction ? From the Abstract of the School Returns of this Commonwealth, (which I have this day submitted to the Board,) including Boston, Salem, Lowell, Charlestown, and other towns, with their liberal salaries, it appears, that the average wages per month paid to male teachers throughout the State, inclusive of board, is twenty-five dollars and forty-four cents ; and to female teachers, eleven dollars and thirty-eight cents. Considering that many more than half of the whole number of teachers are employed in the counties bordering on the sea, it is supposed, that two dollars and fifty cents a week for males, and one dollar and fifty cents a week for females, would be a very low estimate for the average price of their board, respectively, throughout the State. In the country, there would not be this difference between males and females, but in the populous towns and cities it would probably be greater. That of females is purposely put rather low, because there were several towns, where it was not included, by the returns, in the wages. On this basis of computation, the average wages of male teachers throughout the State, is fifteen dollars and forty-four cents a month, exclusive of board ; or at the rate of one hundred and eighty-five dollars and twenty-eight cents by the year ;—and the average wages of female teachers, exclusive of board, is five dollars and thirty-eight cents a month, at the rate of sixty-four dollars and fifty-six cents by the year.

In regard to moral instruction, the condition of our public schools presents a singular, and, to some extent at least, an alarming phenomenon. To prevent the school from being converted into an engine of religious proselytism ; to debar successive teachers in the same school, from successively inculcating hostile religious creeds, until the children in their simple-mindedness should be alienated, not only from creeds, but from religion itself ; the statute of 1826, specially provided, that no school books should be used in any of the public schools, "calculated to favor any particular religious sect or tenet." The language of the Revised Statutes is slightly altered, but the sense remains the same. Probably, no one would desire a repeal of this law, while the danger impends, it was designed to repel. The consequence of the enactment, however, has been, that among the vast libraries of books, expository of the doctrines of revealed religion, none have been found, free from that advocacy of particular "tenets" or "sects," which includes them within the scope of the legal prohibition ; or, at least, no such books have been approved by committees, and introduced into the schools. Independently, therefore, of the immeasurable importance of moral teaching, in itself considered, this entire exclusion of religious teaching, though justifiable under the circumstances, enhances and magnifies, a thousand fold, the indispensableness of moral instruction and training. Entirely to discard the inculcation of the great doctrines of morality and of

natural theology, has a vehement tendency to drive mankind into opposite extremes ; to make them devotees on one side, or profligates on the other ; each about equally regardless of the true constituents of human welfare. Against a tendency to these fatal extremes, the beautiful and sublime truths of ethics and of natural religion have a poising power. Hence it will be learnt with sorrow, that of the multiplicity of books used in our schools, only three have this object in view ; and these three are used in only *six* of the two thousand nine hundred and eighteen schools, from which returns have been received.

I have adverted to this topic in this connexion, not only on account of its intrinsic importance, but on account of its relationship to the one last considered. Under our present system, indeed, this is only a branch of the preceding topic. If children are not systematically instructed in the duties they now owe, as sons and daughters, as brothers and sisters, as school-fellows and associates ;—in the duties also which they will so soon owe, when, emerging from parental restraint and becoming a part of the sovereignty of the State, they will be enrolled among the arbiters of a nation's destiny ; is not the importance immeasurably augmented, of employing teachers, who will, themselves, be a living lesson to their pupils, of decorous behavior, of order, of magnanimity, of justice, of affection ; and who, if they do not directly teach the principles, will still, by their example, transfuse and instil something of the sentiment of virtue ? Engaged in the Common Schools of this State, there are now, out of the city of Boston, but few more than a hundred male teachers, who devote themselves to teaching as a regular employment or profession. The number of females is a little, though not materially, larger. Very few even of these have ever had any special training for their vocation. The rest are generally young persons, taken from agricultural or mechanical employments, which have no tendency to qualify them for the difficult station ; or they are undergraduates of our colleges, some of whom, there is reason to suspect, think more of what they are to receive at the end of the stipulated term, than what they are to impart during its continuance. To the great majority of them all, however, I concede, because I sincerely believe it is their due, higher motives of action, than those which govern men in the ordinary callings of life ; yet still, are they not, inevitably, too inexperienced, to understand and to act upon, the idea, that the great secret of insuring a voluntary obedience to duty consists in a skilful preparation of motives beforehand ? Can they be expected, as a body, to be able to present to their older pupils, a visible scale as it were, upon which the objects of life, so far forth as this world is concerned, are marked down, according to their relative values ? Among the pagan Greeks, the men most venerated for their wisdom, their Platos and Socrates, were the educators of their youth. And after such teachers as we employ, are introduced into the schools, they address themselves to the culture of the intellect mainly. The fact that children have moral natures and social affections, then in the most rapid state of developement, is scarcely recognised. One page of the daily manual teaches the power of commas ; another, the spelling of words ; another, the rules of cadence and emphasis ; but the pages are missing which teach the laws of forbearance under injury, of sympathy with misfortune, of impartiality in our judgments of men, of love and fidelity to truth ; of the ever-during relations of men, in the domestic circle, in the organized government, and of stranger to stranger. How can it be expected, that such cultivation will scatter seeds, so that, in the language of Scripture, "*instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree !*" If such be the general condition of the schools, is it a matter of surprise, that we see lads and young men thickly springing up in the midst of us, who startle at the mispronunciation of a word, as though they were personally injured, but can hear volleys of profanity, unmoved ; who put on arrogant airs of superior breeding, or

sneer with contempt, at a case of false spelling or grammar, but can witness spectacles of drunkenness in the streets with entire composure. Such elevation of the subordinate, such casting down of the supreme, in the education of children, is incompatible with all that is worthy to be called the prosperity of their manhood. The moral universe is constructed upon principles, not admissive of welfare under such an administration of its laws. In such early habits, there is a gravitation and proclivity to ultimate downfall and ruin. If persevered in, the consummation of a people's destiny, may still be a question of time, but it ceases to be one of certainty. To avert the catastrophe, we must look to a change in our own measures, not to any repeal or suspension of the ordinances of Nature. These, as they were originally framed in wisdom, need no amendment. Whoever wishes for a change in effects without a corresponding change in causes, wishes for a violation of Nature's laws. He proposes, as a remedy for the folly of men, an abrogation of the wisdom of Providence.

One of the greatest and most exigent wants of our schools at the present time, is a book, portraying, with attractive illustration and with a simplicity adapted to the simplicity of childhood, the obligations arising from social relationships; making them stand out, with the altitude of mountains, above the level of the engrossments of life;—not a book written for the copy-right's sake, but one emanating from some comprehension of the benefits of supplying children, at an early age, with simple and elementary notions of right and wrong in feeling and in conduct, so that the appetites and passions, as they spring up in the mind, may, by a natural process, be conformed to the principles, instead of the principles being made to conform to the passions and appetites.

It is said, by a late writer on the present condition of France, to have been ascertained, after an examination of great extent and minuteness, that most crimes are perpetrated in those provinces, where most of the inhabitants can read and write. Nor is this a mere general fact, but the ratio is preserved with mathematical exactness; the proportion of those who can read and write, directly representing the proportion of criminals, and conversely. Their morals have been neglected, and the cultivated intellect presents to the uncultivated feelings, not only a larger circle of temptations, but better instruments for their gratification.

It is thought by some, that the State cannot afford any advance upon the present salaries of teachers, which we have seen to be on an average, exclusive of board, fifteen dollars and forty-four cents per month for males, and five dollars and thirty-eight cents for females. The valuation of the State, according to the census of 1830, was \$208,360,407 54. During the past season, it has been repeatedly stated, in several of the public papers, and, so far as I have seen, without contradiction or question, that it is now equal to three hundred millions. The amount raised by taxes the current year, for the support of Common Schools, in the towns heard from, is four hundred and sixty-five thousand two hundred and twenty-eight dollars and four cents, which, if we assume the correctness of the above estimate respecting the whole property in the State, is less than one mill and six tenths of a mill on the dollar.

Would it not seem, as though the question were put, not in sobriety, but in derision, if it were asked, whether something more than one six-hundredth part of the welfare of the State might not come from the enlightenment of its intellect and the soundness of its morals; and yet this would, to some extent certainly, involve the question whether the State could afford any increase of its annual appropriations for schools.

There are other topics, connected with this subject, worthy of exposition, did time permit. I can enumerate but one or two of them in closing this report.

The law of 1836, respecting children employed in factories, is believed to have been already most salutary in its operation. I have undoubted

authority for saying, that, in one place, four hundred children went to school, last winter, who never had been before, and whose attendance then was solely attributable to that law. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed, (as the law took effect April 1, 1837,) to determine whether there is a general disposition to comply with its requirements. So far as I have learned, the accounts hold out an encouraging prospect of compliance on the part of the owners and agents of manufacturing establishments, notwithstanding attempts to evade it by some parents, who hold their children to be articles of property, and value them by no higher standard than the money they can earn.

From the best information I have been able to obtain, I am led to believe, that there are not more than fifty towns in the State, where any thing worthy the name of apparatus is used in schools. With few exceptions, Holbrook's Common School apparatus, and occasionally a globe, conclude the list. Thus the natural superiority of the eye over all the other senses, in quickness, in precision, in the vastness of its field of operations, in its power of penetrating into any interstices where light can go and come, and of perceiving, in their just collocations, the different parts of complex objects, is foregone. Children get dim and imperfect notions about many things, where, with visible illustrations, they might acquire living and perfect ones at a glance. This great defect will undoubtedly be, to a considerable extent, supplied by the law of April 12, 1837, which authorizes school districts to raise money by taxation, to be expended for the purchase of apparatus and Common School Libraries, in sums not exceeding thirty dollars the first year, and ten for any succeeding year.

In every county where I have been, excepting two, county associations for the improvement of Common Schools have been formed. In the two excepted counties, there were teachers' associations previously existing. Measures were taken to make those associations auxiliary to the Board of Education in the general plan of State operations. These county associations, will open a channel of communication in both directions, between the Board as a central body, and the several towns and school districts in the State; and through the Board, between all the different parts of the State; so that improvements, devised or discovered in any place, instead of being wholly lost, may be universally diffused, and sound views, upon this great subject, may be multiplied by the number of minds capable of understanding them. Several excellent addresses have already emanated from committees, appointed by these associations or by the conventions which originated them.

If, in addition to these county associations, town associations could be formed, consisting of teachers, school-committee men, and the friends of education generally, who should meet to discuss the relative merits of different modes of teaching,—thus discarding the worst, and improving even the best,—but little, perhaps nothing more, could be desired in the way of systematic organization. It should be a special duty of all the members of the town associations, to secure, as far as possible, a regular and punctual attendance of the children upon the schools.

Some means of obtaining more precise information respecting the number of scholars, attending the public schools, and the regularity of that attendance, is most desirable. The practice of keeping registers in the schools, indispensable as it is to statistical accuracy, seems to be very often neglected. In preparing the abstract, evidence has been constantly occurring of the want of information, which such registers would have supplied. Sometimes, the committee resort to conjecture; sometimes they frankly avow their ignorance of the desired fact; and sometimes all the sums, set down in several columns of considerable length, have a common multiple, which is incompatible with the diversity of actual occurrences. On the whole, there is, undoubtedly, a very close approximation of truth;

and where particulars are so numerous, errors on one side will often balance and cancel errors on the other ; excepting where there is some standing bias, when the errors will all be on the gravitating side. Still exactness should be aimed at, as statistics are every day becoming more and more the basis of legislation and economical science. While the State, in the administration of its military functions, establishes a separate department, fills the statute books with pages of minute regulations and formidable penalties, commissions various grades of officers, so that the fact of every missing gun-flint and priming-wire may be detected, transmitted, and recorded among its archives, it prescribes no means of ascertaining how many of its children are deserters from what should be the nurseries of intelligence and morality. This is mentioned here with no view of disparaging what is done, but only to contrast it with what is omitted.

Not a little inconvenience results from the fact, that school committees are elected at the annual town meetings in the Spring, and are obliged to make their returns in October following. Their returns, therefore, cover but half the time of their own continuance in office, while they cover half the time of the official existence of their predecessors. It is for the Legislature to say, whether there be any good reason, why the time covered by these returns should not be coincident with their duration in office.

In closing this report, I wish to observe, that, should it ever fall under the notice, either of individuals or of classes, who may suspect that some imputation is cast upon them by any of its statements, I wish to assure them, that no word of it has been dictated by a feeling of unkindness to any one. The object of whatever has been said, was to expose defects in a system so substantially excellent, as to require any labor for its reformation ; and all the remarks which may seem accusatory of persons connected with it, have caused me more pain to write, than they can any one to read. To have spoken in universal commendation of the system and of its administrators, would have been most grateful, could it have been, also, true ; but, in the discharge of a duty, respecting one of the most valuable and enduring of human interests, I have felt, that it would be unworthy the sacred character of the cause, if, to purchase any temporary gratification for others or for myself, I could have sacrificed one particle of the permanent utility of truth.

HORACE MANN,
Secretary of the Board of Education.

Boston, January 1, 1833.

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

FELLOW CITIZENS :—At the last session of the Legislature, a Board of Education was established by law, consisting of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, *ex officio*, and eight other persons to be appointed by the Executive of the Commonwealth. It was made the duty of this Board to prepare and lay before the Legislature, in a printed form, on or before the second Wednesday in January, annually, an abstract of the School Returns, received by the Secretary of the Commonwealth ; and the Board was authorized to appoint a Secretary, whose duty it should be, under the direction of the Board, to collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the Common Schools and other means of popular education ; and to diffuse as widely as possible, throughout the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the Education of the Young ;—and it was also made the duty of the Board of Education, annually, to make a detailed report to the Legislature of all its doings, with such observations as experience and reflection may suggest, upon the condition and efficiency of our system of popular education, and the most practicable means of improving and extending it.

It will be perceived, that the province of the Board, as constituted by the Legislature, is principally confined to the collection and diffusion of information. The most valuable results may be anticipated from the action of the Legislature and the People of the Commonwealth, upon the subject of Education, when the facts belonging to this all-important interest, shall have been collected and submitted to their consideration. The undersigned, members of the Board, are anxious to discharge the duty devolved upon them, to the best

of their ability ; and no efforts will be spared by the Secretary of the Board, under its direction, to collect and diffuse information on the condition of our Schools, and the means of improving them. It is obvious, however, that, with the limited powers possessed by the Board, the success of its efforts must depend mainly, on the general and cordial cooperation of the People ; and it is the object of this Address to call upon the friends of Education throughout the Commonwealth, to come to the aid of the Board in the discharge of their duty.

It has been judged by the undersigned, that this cooperation can in no way more effectually be given, than by a Convention to be held in each County of the Commonwealth, at some convenient time in the course of the Summer and Autumn. These Conventions might be attended by Teachers from each town in the County, by the Chairman and other members of the School Committees, by the Reverend Clergy, and generally by all, who take an interest in the great duty of educating the rising generation. The liberality of the friends of Education not able themselves to be present, might be honorably employed in defraying the necessary expenses of those of more limited means, who are willing to give their time and personal exertions to the cause. It is proposed, that the time of holding these meetings should be arranged by the Secretary hereafter, in such a manner as best to promote the public convenience, with a view to general attendance, and so as to allow the Secretary to be present at each County Convention. The Conventions will also be attended by those members of the Board whose residence is near the place of meeting. Seasonable notice of the time of holding each County Convention, will be duly given, and though the Board respectfully invite the presence of all persons taking an interest in the cause of Education, as above suggested, they would also recommend that meetings be held in each town, for the purpose of appointing delegates specially deputed to attend ;— and to effect this object, a circular letter will be addressed by the Secretary to the School Committee of each town, requesting that a meeting of the friends of Education may be called to appoint delegates to the County Convention.

The conductors of the public press, are particularly requested to call the attention of the community to this subject, and to lend their powerful aid in promoting the design of the Legislature in creating a Board of Education. Deeply convinced of the great amount of good which, under Providence, may be effected by carrying that design into execution, the undersigned respectfully recommend it to the countenance of all the friends of Education in the State, and earnestly solicit their support and assistance.

EDWARD EVERETT,
GEORGE HULL,
JAMES G. CARTER,
EMERSON DAVIS,
EDMUND DWIGHT,

HORACE MANN,
EDWARD A. NEWTON,
ROBERT RANTOUL, JR.
THOMAS ROBBINS,
JARED SPARKS.

Boston, June 29, 1837.

(Blank form of Circular referred to above.)

GENTLEMEN OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE : I address you as the Secretary of the Massachusetts "Board of Education." The Circular Address of the Board is prefixed. In that, you will perceive, they recommend that a Convention be held in each County of the State, to be attended "by Teachers from each Town, by the Chairman and other members of the School Committees, by the Reverend Clergy, and generally by all who take an interest in the great duty of educating the rising generation." In pursuance of this plan, and after such consultation respecting the time and place as could conveniently be had, it has been concluded to name the day of

next, at 10'clock, A. M., and the Town of

for that purpose, in your County.

At that time and place you are most respectfully and earnestly invited to attend yourselves, and to procure the attendance of all such other persons, as may be able to enlighten by their counsel, or contribute from their experience. It is hoped that each Town will send delegates, as suggested in the Address of the Board. A collection of facts, and a development and discussion of principles is desired, in order that the best methods of education may first be well ascertained and then universally diffused.

In this age, when so much has been done for the melioration of society, by educating new and beneficial truths from an enlarged knowledge of facts, it would be the subject of equal surprise and regret, if the education of youth, from which arises so large a portion of all individual and social good, should be found to be the only thing incapable of improvement.

In order to direct attention to some leading considerations, I take the liberty to add a few inquiries, which you are requested to answer in as particular a manner as your convenience will allow.

1.—Is inconvenience or discomfort suffered from the construction or location of School-houses in your Town, and if so in what manner ?

2.—Are the requisitions of law complied with in your Town, in relation to the aggregate length of time in which Schools are kept ; the different kinds of Schools kept, and the qualifications of the Teachers employed ?

[NOTE.—The requisitions of the law are substantially as follows : Towns containing *fifty* families or householders are required to maintain a School or Schools for terms of time, which shall together be equivalent to *six* months in each year, in which children shall be instructed in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, and good behavior, by teachers of competent ability and good morals.

In towns of *one hundred* families or householders, the same kinds of Schools are to be kept for terms which, together, shall be equivalent to *twelve* months.

In towns of *one hundred and fifty* families or householders, the same kinds of Schools and not less than two, are to be kept for terms not less than nine months each, or three or more Schools, for terms together equivalent to *eighteen* months.

In towns of *five hundred* families, similar Schools—not less than two—are to be kept for *twelve* months each, or three or more such Schools for terms, together equivalent to *twenty-four* months ; and in addition to the above, they are required to maintain a School for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town, *ten* months at least, exclusive of vacations, in each year, in which the history of the United States, book-keeping, surveying, geometry, and algebra shall be taught by a master of competent ability and good morals. And if the town contain four thousand inhabitants, the teacher shall, in addition to all the branches above enumerated, be competent to instruct in the Latin and Greek languages, general history, rhetoric, and logic.]

3.—Does your Town choose a School Committee each year ? Do they organize as a Committee, and do they visit and examine the Schools, as required by law ?

4.—Are School-Committee men paid for their services ? If so, how much ?

5.—Are Teachers employed for the Public Schools, *without* being examined and approved, or *before* being examined and approved by the Committee ?

6.—Do parents, *in general*, exhibit any public interest in the character and progress of Schools, by attending examinations or otherwise ?

7.—Do the School Committee select the kinds of books to be used in Schools, or is it left to parents and teachers ?

8.—Do the School Committee cause books to be furnished, at the expense of the Town, to such scholars as are destitute of those required ?

9.—Is there a uniformity of books in the same School ?

10.—Is any apparatus used in your Schools ? If so, in how many, and of what kinds is it ?

11.—Have any Teachers been employed who practise School-keeping as a regular employment or profession ? If any, how many ? Are they male or female ?

The above questions are not intended to exclude communications upon any other topic which may be deemed important.

Such persons friendly to the cause of Education, as may be unavoidably deterred from attending the Convention, would perform a public service, by making written communications, upon the above subjects, or others, and forwarding them to the Convention, addressed to the Secretary.

HORACE MANN,

Secretary of the Board of Education.

Boston, August 7, 1837.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ON THE SUBJECT OF SCHOOLHOUSES, SUPPLEMENTARY TO HIS FIRST ANNUAL REPORT.

HON. MYRON LAWRENCE, *President of the Senate* :

SIR :—I have the honor herewith to transmit to you, for the information of the Legislature, a Supplementary Report from the Secretary of the Board of Education on the subject of Schoolhouses.

I am, Sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

EDWARD EVERETT.

Council Chamber, 29th March, 1838.

REPORT.

TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION :

Gentlemen :—In the Report, which I lately submitted to you on the subject of our “Common Schools and other means of popular education,” I

mentioned schoolhouse architecture, as one of the cardinal points in the system, and I reserved the consideration of that topic for a special communication.

In my late tour of exploration, made into every county in the State, I personally examined or obtained exact and specific information, regarding the relative size, construction, and condition of about eight hundred school-houses ; and, in various ways—principally by correspondence—I have obtained general information respecting, at least, a thousand more.

As long ago as 1832, it was said by the Board of Censors of the American Institute of Instruction, that "if we were called upon to name the most prominent defects in the schools of our country,—that which contributes most, directly and indirectly, to retard the progress of public education, and which most loudly calls for a prompt and thorough reform, it would be the want of spacious and convenient schoolhouses." As a general fact, I do not think the common, district, schoolhouses are better now, than when the above remark was written. I have, therefore, thought, that I could, at this time, in no other way, more efficiently subserve the interests of the cause in which we are engaged, than in bringing together and presenting under one view, the most essential points respecting the structure and location, of a class of buildings, which may be said to constitute the household of education.

I do not propose to describe a perfect model, and to urge a universal conformity. It is obvious, that some difference in construction is necessary, according to the different kind of school to be kept. In each case, it must be considered, whether the schoolroom be that of an academy or of an infant school ; whether it be in the city or in the country ; for males or for females, or both ; whether designed to accommodate many scholars or only a few ; or, whether the range of studies to be pursued is extensive, or elementary only. The essentials being understood, the plan can be modified for adaptation to each particular case.

The schoolhouses in the State have a few common characteristics. They are, almost universally, contracted in size ; they are situated immediately on the road-side, and are without any proper means of ventilation. In most other respects, the greatest diversity prevails. The floors of some are horizontal ; those of others rise in the form of an amphitheatre, on two, or sometimes, on three sides, from an open area in the centre. On the horizontal floors, the seats and desks are sometimes designed only for a single scholar ; allowing the teacher room to approach, on either side, and giving an opportunity to go out or into the seat, without disturbance of any one. In others, ten scholars are seated on one seat, and at one desk, so that the middle ones can neither go out nor in without disturbing, at least, four of their neighbors. In others, again, long tables are prepared, at which the scholars sit face to face, like large companies at dinner. In others, the seats are arranged on the sides of the room, the walls of the house forming the backs of the seats, and the scholars, as they sit at the desks, facing inwards ; while in others, the desks are attached to the walls, and the scholars face outwards. The form of schoolhouses is, with very few exceptions, that of a square or oblong. Some, however, are round, with an open circular area in the centre of the room, for the teacher's desk and a stove, with seats and desks around the wall, facing outwards, separated from each other by high partitions, which project some distance into the room, so that the scholars may be turned into these separate compartments, as into so many separate stalls. In no particular does chance seem to have had so much sway as in regard to light. In many, so much of the walls is occupied by windows, that there is but little difference between the intensity and the changes of light within and without the school-room ; while in some others, there is but one small window on each of the three sides of the house and none on the fourth. Without specifying fur-

ther particulars, however, it seems clear that some plan may be devised, combining the substantial advantages and avoiding the principal defects of all.

In the Report, above referred to, it was observed, that "when it is considered, that more than five-sixths of all the children in the State spend a considerable portion of the most impressible period of their lives in the schoolhouse, the general condition of those buildings and their influences upon the young stand forth, at once, as topics of prominence and magnitude. The construction of schoolhouses connects itself closely with the love of study, with proficiency, health, anatomical formation, and length of life. These are great interests and therefore suggest great duties. It is believed, that in some important particulars, their structure can be improved, without the slightest additional expense; and that, in other respects, a small advance in cost would be returned a thousand fold in the improvement of those habits, tastes, and sentiments of our children, which are so soon to be developed into public manners, institutions, and laws, and to become unchangeable history."

The subject of schoolhouse architecture will be best considered under distinct heads.

VENTILATION AND WARMING.

Ventilation and warming are considered together, because they may be easily made to cooperate with each other in the production of health and comfort. It seems generally to have been forgotten, that a room, designed to accommodate fifty, one hundred, and, in some cases, two hundred persons, should be differently constructed from one, intended for a common family of eight or ten only. In no other particular is this difference so essential as in regard to ventilation. There is no such immediate, indispensable necessity of life, as fresh air. A man may live for days, endure great hardships, and even perform great labors, without food, without drink, or without sleep; but deprive him of air for only one minute, and all power of thought is extinct; he becomes as incapable of any intellectual operation as a dead man, and in a few minutes more, he is gone beyond resuscitation. Nor is this all;—but just in proportion as the stimulus of air is withheld, the whole system loses vigor. As the machinery in a water-mill slackens when the head of water is drawn down; as a locomotive loses speed if the fire be not seasonably replenished; just so do muscle, nerve, and faculty, faint and expire, if a sufficiency of vital air be not supplied to the lungs. As this Report is designed to produce actual results for the benefit of our children; and as it is said to be characteristic of our people, that they cannot be roused to action, until they see the reasons for it, nor restrained from action when they do, I shall proceed to state the facts, whether popular or scientific, which bear upon this important subject.

(To be continued in our next Number.)

THE SCHOOL LIBRARY.

THE Publishers of the Series of Reading Books, under the above title are happy in being able to state, that the first ten volumes of the larger series are now stereotyped, and will be published during the present month. These volumes are, *Life of Columbus*, by Washington Irving; *Paley's Theology*, with the Notes and Dissertations of Sir Charles Bell and Lord Brougham, edited by Elisha Bartlett, M. D., of Lowell, with nearly one hundred illustrative engravings, in two volumes; *Lives of Eminent Individuals celebrated in American History*, three volumes; and *Sacred Philosophy of the Seasons*, by Rev. Henry Duncan, D. D., of Ruthwell, Scotland, with additions and modifications, and Notes, adapting it to American Readers, by Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, in four volumes.

A part of the Juvenile series are also stereotyped.

[THE COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL; published semi-monthly by *Marsh, Capen, Lyon, & Webb*, Boston: HORACE MANN, Editor. Price, One Dollar a year.]